



Disaster Preparedness: Communications & Outreach Plan

**Department of Emergency Management in collaboration
with the Community & Government Affairs Team**

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose – The Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) Disaster Preparedness Communications and Outreach Plan (Outreach Plan) establishes guidelines for how the County and its allied stakeholders will share disaster preparedness information and conduct engagement with the community.

Through the Plan, DEM will endeavor to educate and empower Sonoma County residents, neighborhoods, community groups, and the private sector to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters. The goal of the campaign is to promote preparedness through public involvement via traditional and new media approaches and will seek out opportunities to present clear, concise and consistent messages targeted to specific audiences and tailored to community needs.

- A. Scope – This plan describes how the County will conduct its disaster preparedness communications and outreach program. The program encompasses activities to inform the public and provides opportunities for the public to inform DEM’s policies and programs.

- B. Goals – The goals of the plan are to:
 - 1. Educate and empower residents to better prepare themselves, their families, their businesses and their neighborhoods for an emergency.
 - 2. Show local communities, business partners, organizations and Sonoma County residents how to reduce their exposure to natural and human-caused hazards.
 - 3. Strengthen relationships between and among local jurisdictions, businesses and regional partners to improve public messaging before, during and after an emergency.
 - 4. Increase DEM’s presence as a trusted community resource for issues of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

- C. Context – Why Should Sonoma County Residents Prepare?
 - 1. Being prepared can reduce the fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a wildfire and where to seek shelter during an earthquake. They should be ready to evacuate their homes, take care of those needing additional assistance, and know how to address their basic medical needs.
 - 2. People also can reduce the impact of disasters (flood proofing, elevating a home or moving a home out of harm’s way, and

securing items that could shake loose in an earthquake) and often avoid the danger completely. Given the County's recent disaster experiences, , the need to prepare now is real.

3. If a disaster occurs in our community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help residents as much as possible, however, local responders may not be able to reach people immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere. Residents are the true first responders, alerting and caring for themselves, their families and their communities.
4. Residents should understand what natural and man-made hazards exist where they live and work. Residents should know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in Sonoma County including earthquake, wildfire, flood, tsunami, hazardous materials release, or utility disruption. – .

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Background – DEM's community outreach efforts recognize that people have widely varying motivations and commitments to emergency preparedness and activities that reduce their vulnerabilities to hazards. Among the general public, we would expect to find varying degrees of disaster preparedness based upon hazard, vulnerability and the cost and complexity of preparedness measures.

1. To be effective, information must come from multiple sources, be communicated over multiple modes of communication, focus on what actions to take, and explain how those actions reduce future losses. The information must be relevant, consistent and delivered in the appropriate language and method.
2. The impact of seeing/observing others taking action to prepare and mitigate is generally stronger and has a greater impact than passively receiving information. The more people hear, read and see, the more they will do to get prepared.
3. People will organize themselves around formal and informal networks of friends, interests, and community and the County needs to engage the public through these established networks.

Context – Messages on disaster preparedness and mitigation typically have low market penetration. Coordinated public messaging that provides a clear, common and consistent message will increase its effectiveness.

STRATEGIES & IMPLEMENTATION

County staff are guided by the following principles when providing communications and conducting outreach to the community.

1. Public involvement is an essential part of the design and implementation of DEM's programs, policies and plans.
2. Feedback received from the public will be actively used to improve DEM's operations.
3. Outreach efforts will identify and align key messages to audiences and will attempt to reach our diverse communities.
4. Partnerships with the media, community organizations and other groups encourage and facilitate public involvement.

Key Messages – The County believes that preparedness is not a thing that you can buy or own. Rather, preparing yourself and your family involves small, simple steps taken consistently over time. There are three, national-level core messages that collectively outline a series of simple preparedness steps. These will generally be included in all communications and outreach, regardless of the specific project or event:

1. Make a plan – encourage individuals, families, businesses, specific communities and other groups to develop a plan for an emergency. The plan should apply to a wide range of hazards and situations.
2. Assemble a kit – persuade residents to assemble emergency kits (with a minimum three days of supplies) at home, at work, in their vehicles and anywhere else they spend time. Emphasize that having a kit allows individuals to be more self-sufficient in an emergency and reduces the demands on first responders.
3. Stay informed – communicate ways to stay informed about natural and human-caused hazards, changing conditions and events in the surrounding community. Share a range of options to obtain information (i.e. PublicAlerts.org, National Weather Service, local media, etc.).

In order to push the key messages, specific branding will be developed (i.e. "Anytime, Anywhere: Prepare", "Sonoma Ready") and promoted in partnership regional partners and stakeholders.

Outreach to Target Audiences – The County recognizes that members of the community have varying levels of emergency preparedness. Resident preparedness can be categorized into three general groups:

1. Those who have and routinely practice emergency plans. This group needs ongoing encouragement and access to training, but already understands the importance of preparedness. They may be encouraged to share their efforts with others.
2. Those who may or may not have a plan, but are aware of the importance of emergency preparedness. This group needs access to information and tools on how to elevate their level of preparedness.
3. Those who do not have a plan or practice emergency preparedness. This group – the largest – first needs to be persuaded that preparedness is worth their time, and then provided with information, simple first steps, and ongoing encouragement.

Depending on the circumstances of the situation, DEM will coordinate outreach and share information by leveraging existing relationships with public and private partners, through direct communication and, in some cases, by building new relationships.

For example, working closely with and supporting the efforts of agencies directly involved with people with access and functional needs on a daily basis will better ensure communications and more effective outreach efforts.

1. Communication Strategies and Activities – Communications and outreach activities will promote the overall core messages (i.e. make a plan, assemble a kit, stay informed), communicate information specific to a seasonal topic (i.e. fire weather preparedness) and motivate the community around emergency preparedness. Some activities DEM will implement include the following:
 - a. Conducting high profile hazard-specific preparedness events (i.e. to kick off awareness campaigns such as the Great ShakeOut, etc.).
 - b. Working with local radio stations to develop and deliver Public Service Announcements (PSA).
 - c. Working with partner agencies within the county and around the region on preparedness events, conferences and information sharing.
 - d. Updating content on the SoCoEmergency website.
 - e. Creating/updating printed materials and ensuring the materials are accessible to non-English speakers.
 - f. Conducting targeted outreach to share information and build relationships with community stakeholders.
 - g. Running social media campaigns for key hazard topics.
 - h. Working with local school districts to add preparedness messages to their digital newsletter.
 - i. Organizing or attending pre-scheduled community meetings to provide information.
2. Topics – Disaster preparedness topics for which outreach materials will be developed include:
 - a. Wildfire Preparedness and Prevention (vegetation management, home hardening, defensible space, general wildfire preparedness)

- b. Floods/Mudslides/Debris Flow Preparedness
 - c. Earthquake Preparedness
 - d. Tsunami Preparedness
 - e. General Preparedness - Disaster Kits (make & practice your plan)
3. Implementation – The implementation of the Outreach Plan is guided by the annual public outreach workplan.
- a. Annual Public Outreach Workplan – a seasonal public outreach plan for the calendar year that outlines emergency preparedness topics (i.e. earthquake awareness month). A sample is attached at the end of this document (Attachment A).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Emergency Management –DEM is responsible for working with DEM staff, the media, partners and stakeholders to implement the Outreach Plan. Also, develop the Annual Public Outreach Workplan.

Media, Community Partners and Stakeholders – In the effort to reach the entire community, DEM will work in partnership with other government, non-profit, private, community organizations and media groups within Sonoma County and around the region. Groups include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Media – television, radio, newspapers (regional and community-based), blogs, etc.
- Other government partners – local, state, federal and special district agencies.
- Neighborhood groups – such as neighborhood coalitions, associations.
- Private sector partners – such as businesses and industry associations.
- Community groups and volunteer organizations – such as CERT, COPE, and faith-based organizations, local advocacy and service groups, etc.
- Schools – public and private K-12 education institutions, higher education institutions throughout the city, technical and vocational training institutions, etc.

Ownership –DEM is responsible for this plan and for conducting an annual review of its content.

Maintenance – This review will result in revisions based on advice received from a range of stakeholders, including DEM staff, regional partners and the community.

ATTACHMENT A: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLAN CALENDAR

Month	Topic
January	Floods/Mudslides/Debris Flow
February	General Preparedness
March	Tsunami Preparedness (National Tsunami Awareness Week)
April	Earthquake Preparedness (California Earthquake Prep Month)
May	Wildfire Preparedness and prevention (National Wildfire Prep Day)
June	Wildfire Preparedness and prevention
July	Wildfire Preparedness and prevention
August	Wildfire Preparedness and prevention
September	General Preparedness (National Preparedness Month)
October	Earthquake Preparedness (Great Shake Out)
November	Floods/Mudslides/Debris Flow
December	Floods/Mudslides/Debris Flow

Outreach Methods:

- Coordinating and participating in community events (i.e. to kick off awareness campaigns such as the Great ShakeOut, etc.).
- Working with local radio stations to schedule Public Service Announcements (PSA).
- Working with partner agencies within the county and around the region on events, conferences and information sharing.
- Updating content on the SoCoEmergency website.
- Creating/updating pamphlets and other literature (and ensuring the materials are accessible to non-English speakers).
- Conducting targeted outreach to share information and build relationships with stakeholders.
- Developing and leading a social media campaign for each topic.
- Working with local school districts to add preparedness messages to their digital newsletters.
- Organizing or attending pre-scheduled neighborhood/community meetings to provide information.

ATTACHMENT B: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PLAN OPTIONS

Depending on the desired outcome and wanted reach, several free and paid options could be combined to optimize the effectiveness of the campaigns. The options below are intended to provide examples of outreach methods and their associated costs and is not all-inclusive.

One-time costs for ENTIRE preparedness project:	Cost
Graphic Design Assistance	\$ 5,000.00
Review/revision of curricula & materials for approval by schools	\$ 7,000.00
Materials Production	\$ 25,000.00
Total:	\$ 65,000.00

OPTION #1 – FREE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication Channel	Anticipated Reach	Cost
Socoemergency.org	Average daily visitors: 1,300	Free
Nextdoor	115,000+	Free
Facebook	Followers: 12,000 Average Post reach: 110,000 Video reach: 51,019	Free or Paid
Twitter	Followers: 11,000 Monthly Impressions reaching up to 67,000+	Free or Paid
Property Tax Bill	500,000	Free
SoCo Correspondent	3,000	Free

OPTION #2 – PAID ADVERTISING

Costs are approximate and take into account the **total cost** for all campaigns on an annual basis.

Communication Channel	Anticipated Reach	Cost
Billboards	Electronic: # of Ad spots/day: 1,100 minimum guaranteed AADT South bound: 101,000 (daily) 3,030,000/month AADT North bound: 112,000 (daily) 3,360,000/month Static: Impressions: 800,000 (4 weeks)	Electronic: \$4,500 - \$6,500 Static: \$4,500
Newspaper Advertising (Press Democrat, La Prensa, other local papers)	Varies	\$50,000
Radio (KZST, KBBF, KSRO, etc.)	Depends on station/package chosen	\$5,000
Television*	Depends on station/package chosen	\$10,000

Direct Mail	.30 cents per piece (countywide mailing 500,000 pieces)	\$150,000
Printing	.35 cents per piece (countywide mailing 500,000 pieces)	\$175,000
Total		\$395,000.00

*Television is not recommended because it would be difficult to target messaging to just Sonoma County and we would most likely saturate markets that reach outside of Sonoma County (Marin, for example).

Other approximate costs:	Cost
Community Events	Varies (Free - \$500.00)
SWAG (Magnets, coloring books, pencils, pens, etc.)	Varies
Total:	\$ -

OPTION #3 – EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR K-12 GRADES

Rather than attempt to target the “general public”, disaster preparedness can also be considered a “long view” effort. Focusing resources on children allows for disaster preparedness to be developed as a life skill. By partnering with local schools and employing a credentialed teacher using high quality materials, preparedness can be incorporated into school curricula at the 5th, 8th, and/or 12th grade levels. There are 71,000 K-12 students in Sonoma County public schools.

Get Ready 5th Grade, available to all 5th graders in the Bay Area, is a 1-hour lesson to learn about possible disasters in our area and how students can take action and lead their family to prepare for emergencies at home. Studies have shown that children can be very effective in disaster preparedness. 70% of homes where children brought home materials from school have had a family discussion about preparedness.



Why the 5th Grade? 5th graders are at the appropriate age group in terms of maturity level and ability to influence family members. Studies have shown that they're at the right age to take this information, learn it, and apply it to their life. Get Ready 5 has been active in Marin County since 2009. 8th Grade allows for an opportunity to reinforce preparedness messaging and potentially be incorporated with geosciences subjects. 12th Grade activities may include preparedness research and/or community service projects.

Ongoing annual costs associated with project:	Cost
Contracted teacher	\$ 20,000.00
Total:	\$ 20,000.00